

gave support to the opposition, and said Western diplomats had gone too far by offering food and water to jailed opposition activists;

Whereas victims of physical assault by the Government of Zimbabwe have been denied emergency medical transfer to hospitals in neighboring South Africa, where their wounds can be properly treated;

Whereas those incarcerated by the Government of Zimbabwe were denied access to legal representatives and lawyers appearing at the jails to meet with detained clients were themselves threatened and intimidated;

Whereas at the time of Zimbabwe's independence, President Robert Mugabe was hailed as a liberator and Zimbabwe showed bright prospects for democracy, economic development, domestic reconciliation, and prosperity;

Whereas President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF government continue to turn away from the promises of liberation and use state power to deny the people of Zimbabwe the freedom and prosperity they fought for and deserve;

Whereas the staggering suffering brought about by the misrule of Zimbabwe has created a large-scale humanitarian crisis in which 3,500 people die each week from a combination of disease, hunger, neglect, and despair;

Whereas the Chairman of the African Union, President Alpha Oumar Konare, expressed "great concern" about Zimbabwe's crisis and called for the need for the scrupulous respect for human rights and democratic principles in Zimbabwe;

Whereas the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Non-governmental Organizations stated that "We believe that the crisis has reached a point where Zimbabweans need to be strongly persuaded and directly assisted to find an urgent solution to the crisis that affects the entire region.";

Whereas Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa has likened Zimbabwe to a "sinking Titanic" and has urged southern Africa to take a new approach to Zimbabwe, stating that "quiet diplomacy has failed to help solve the political chaos and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe";

Whereas European Union and African, Caribbean, and Pacific lawmakers strongly condemned the latest attack on an opposition official in Zimbabwe and urged the government in Harare to cooperate with the political opposition to restore the rule of law; and

Whereas United States Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Christopher Dell, warned that opposition to President Robert Mugabe had reached a tipping point because the people no longer feared the regime and believed they had nothing left to lose: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—*

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) the state-sponsored violence taking place in Zimbabwe represents a serious violation of fundamental human rights and the rule of law and should be condemned by all responsible governments, civic organizations, religious leaders, and international bodies; and

(B) the Government of Zimbabwe has not lived up to its commitments as a signatory to the Constitutive Act of the African Union and African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights which enshrine commitment to human rights and good governance as foundational principles of African states; and

(2) Congress—

(A) condemns the Government of Zimbabwe's violent suppression of political and human rights through its police force, security forces, and youth militia that delib-

erately inflict gross physical harm, intimidation, and abuse on those legitimately protesting the failing policies of the government;

(B) holds those individual police, security force members, and militia involved in abuse and torture responsible for the acts that they have committed;

(C) condemns government harassment and intimidation of lawyers attempting to carry out their professional obligations to their clients and repeated failure by police to comply promptly with court decisions;

(D) condemns the harassment of foreign officials, journalists, human rights workers, and others, including threatening their expulsion from the country if they continue to provide food and water to victims detained in prison and in police custody while in the hospital;

(E) commends United States Ambassador Christopher Dell and other United States Government officials and foreign officials for their support to political detainees and victims of torture and abuse while in police custody or in medical care centers and encourages them to continue providing such support;

(F) calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease immediately its violent campaign against fundamental human rights, to respect the courts and members of the legal profession, and to restore the rule of law while adhering to the principles embodied in an accountable democracy, including freedom of association and freedom of expression;

(G) calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease illegitimate interference in travel abroad by its citizens, especially for humanitarian purposes; and

(H) calls on the leaders of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union to consult urgently with all Zimbabwe stakeholders to intervene with the Government of Zimbabwe while applying appropriate pressures to resolve the economic and political crisis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first I want to thank my good friend from Florida, Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chairman DONALD PAYNE and Ranking Member CHRIS SMITH, and all the other cosponsors of this resolution for joining me in condemning the egregious violence perpetrated against innocent civilians by the Government of Zimbabwe.

For the past 6 years, the Government of Zimbabwe has been on a path of failed policies and distorted vision. As the economy of the country spiraled downward, the Central Bank has been unresponsive and reckless.

Zimbabwe was once known as Southern Africa's bread basket. But after years of disastrous misrule, the people there now find themselves eating field mice to stave off hunger. Zimbabwean officials have the temerity to declare to the world that they eat field mice because they are a delicacy.

On March 11, many segments of Zimbabwe's society joined together to hold a prayer breakfast to focus attention on the country's desperate situation. The government reacted swiftly, violently cracking down on the gathering. In this incident, six opposition activists were shot, and over 50 had to be hospitalized, including key opposition leaders, many of whom did not get proper treatment for their severe injuries.

This latest incident underscores a disturbing pattern of recent years. The Zimbabwean Government pledges peace, then commits human rights violations against its own people, and it precipitates humanitarian crisis after humanitarian crisis. In response to legitimate protests, the government has retaliated with draconian legislation and harsh security enforcement. It transformed Zimbabwe's poor children into violent militia members, not unlike child soldiers in other ravaged African countries.

In 2005, the Zimbabwean Government launched its infamous Operation Throw Out the Trash against citizens in major cities, driving some 700,000 innocent people from their homes, businesses, and livelihoods.

So I ask Mugabe, the dictator of this country, what kind of human being called himself a "leader," yet is willing to commit atrocities against the very people he is supposed to lead?

In spite of Zimbabwe's embittered rhetoric toward the United States, our Congress passed, 6 years ago, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, offering significant economic and political aid to Zimbabwe if it would reverse its anti-democratic and anti-people ways.

Zimbabwe had invaded a neighboring country, grossly mismanaged its economy, flaunted the rule of law and democratic practices. Using the diplomatic tools at our disposal, our government imposed travel and economic sanctions against individuals who were responsible for the grossest violations. The United States remains open to change in Zimbabwe, hopeful about prospects and ready to reward its arrival. We clearly provided an opportunity for Zimbabwe to reverse course and to reap generous economic benefits from the American people.

Unfortunately, the Zimbabwean leaders are bent on a bitter and disastrous course that no sane or rational appeal from its own citizens or the community of nations has been able to reverse.

Today Zimbabwe, once one of the most promising countries of Africa, is a dismal shadow of its former self. It faces an unfathomable inflation rate of